

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS:EEWT, US, UR

SUBJECT: TASS ARTICLE BLAMES U.S. ADMINISTRATION FOR
CURRENT IMPASSE IN U.S.-SOVIET TRADE RELATIONS

1. TASS ARTICLE ON SOVIET-AMERICAN TRADE APPEARING IN
JUNE 6 TASS VESTNIK ALLEGES THAT BLAME FOR CURRENT
DIFFICULTIES IN SOVIET-AMERICAN TRADE RESTS WITH U.S.
ADMINISTRATION. ARTICLE CITES LATEST HARRIS POLL AS
INDICATING THAT 70 PERCENT OF AMERICANS FAVOR DEVELOPMENT
OF BUSINESS RELATIONS WITH USSR AND ELIMINATION OF
ARTIFICIAL OBSTACLES IN PATH OF SOVIET-AMERICAN
COOPERATION. FOLLOWING A FAVORITE SOVIET PRESS TACTIC,
IT ALSO USES TASS INTERVIEWS WITH EXECUTIVES OF TWO
LARGE AMERICAN FIRMS RALSTON PURINA AND CATERPILLAR
(WHICH ALSO HAVE LARGE STAKES IN SOVIET MARKET) TO
SUPPORT ITS CONTENTION THAT AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN FAVOR
REMOVAL OF EXISTING TRADE RESTRICTIONS.

2. ARTICLE REFERS WITH FAVOR TO A BILL IN CONGRESS
INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE HAMILTON "ENVISAGING A
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CURTAILMENT OF RESTRICTIONS ON SOVIET-AMERICAN TRADE."
ACCORDING TO TASS ARTICLE, ONLY VILLAIN IN THE PIECE IS
US ADMINISTRATION "WHICH IN WORDS SUPPORTS BILATERAL
TRADE, BUT IN DEED DOES NOTHING TO NORMALIZE IT."
REFERRING TO RECENT TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE BY UNDER
SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER, ARTICLE ALLEGES THAT "FOR THE
" TIME BEING IT IS THE TOUGH-LINERS WHO SET THE TUNE

FOR OFFICIAL WASHINGTON'S APPROACH TO MATTERS OF SOVIET-AMERICAN TRADE, AND WHO STILL HOPE TO USE TRADE AS A LEVER FOR POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE SOVIET UNION."

3. COMMENT: IT IS , OF COURSE, STANDARD SOVIET PRACTICE TO ARGUE THAT AMERICAN PUBLIC, AND PARTICULARLY AMERICAN BUSINESS, FAVORS REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATORY TRADE MEASURES. PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN ARE REGULARLY CITED IN SUPPORT OF THIS VIEW, AND SOVIET LEADERS SOMETIMES APPEAR GENUINELY PUZZLED WHY LEGISLATION SHOULD REMAIN ON THE BOOKS IN THE FACE OF SUCH OPPOSITION FROM BUSINESSMEN THEMSELVES. RETENTION OF THE MEASURES IS NORMALLY ATTRIBUTED TO A HANDFUL OF "COLD WARRIORS," ESPECIALLY SENATOR JACKSON. THE PRESENT TASS COMMENTARY INCULPATES U.S. ADMINISTRATION FOR DOING NOTHING ABOUT THE SITUATION, BEYOND LIP SERVICE DESPITE THE SUPPOSED DESIRES OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

4. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY BACKGROUND INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON HAMILTON BILL, AS WELL AS COPY OF HARRIS POL REFERRED TO BY TASS. WE SUSPECT THAT TASS HAS ONCE MORE MISREPRESENTED RESULTS OF A U.S. POLL. MATLOCK

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